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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
23 January 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Security Situation in Colombia

1. Colombia is experiencing a period of serious political unrest and uncertainty because of President Valencia's inability to alleviate the country's current economic difficulties. Valencia's failure to exert effective leadership during his five months in office has resulted in a general lack of confidence in the administration.

2. The government is under heavy pressure from all sectors to halt the rapid rise in the cost of living which resulted from devaluation of the peso in November 1962. A failure to improve economic conditions during the next several weeks could lead to public disorders in protest and eventually to a political crisis.

3. A major danger in the current situation is that, for the first time, subversive elements now have popular issues to exploit. While Communist influence remains slight, pro-Communist agitators succeeded on 18 January in turning a peaceful labor demonstration for higher wages into a violent riot.

4. Colombia's 42,000-man army appears capable of preventing serious disorders. However, there is the additional danger that the military--more apolitical by tradition than in most other Latin American countries--may become convinced that they must assume a more active political role to restore firm leadership to the government.

5. The armed forces are presently engaged in an intense campaign to eliminate the chronic rural violence which is still severe in several western states and causes more than 200 deaths each month. While the violence consists largely of banditry, there is

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evidence of increased efforts by the pro-Castro
United Front for Revolutionary Action (FUAR) to
organize guerrilla groups.

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